

# Safety & Health Update

January 2015

## Division of Workers' Compensation

This monthly e-newsletter provides updates on the Workplace Safety Programs of the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). Both subscribers and non-subscribers of workers' compensation insurance are eligible for these services.

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### Transportation Safety Information

#### Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety defines road rage as a violent criminal act involving an intention to cause physical harm. According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), 303 rural crashes and 1,016 urban crashes in Texas

involved road rage in 2013. Of these, eight resulted in fatalities and 178 led to serious injuries. Road rage can be identified by such aggressive driving behaviors as running stop signs or red lights,



Attribution: Joseph Mietus

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### Safety Tips

#### Hand and Portable Power Tools

Tools are such a common part of our lives that sometimes we forget they can pose hazards to us. All tools are manufactured with safety in mind, but injuries can occur if we fail to take the time to find and eliminate hazards associated with the tools. Employees should learn to recognize the hazards and how to correct them before any accidents occur.

#### Hazards of Hand Tools

The greatest hazards posed by hand tools result from misuse and improper maintenance. Some examples of this include the following:



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## Transportation Safety Information (cont.)

### Road Rage and Aggressive Driving (cont.)

speeding, tailgating, passing on the right, and inappropriate hand and facial gestures.

Here are some things that you can do when confronted by an aggressive driver to avoid an altercation:

- Try to stay out of the aggressive driver's way.
- Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to "hold your own" in the travel lane.
- Avoid eye contact with an agitated or aggressive driver.
- Ignore any gestures directed at you.
- If you believe an aggressive driver is following you or trying to start a fight, drive to a place where there are other people around, such as a police station, store, or hospital. If you have a cell phone and can use it safely, call the police. Do not get out of your car and do not go home. ▲

## Download!

### DWC Resources

The DWC offers the following free driving safety publication:

- *Road Rage FactSheet*

This publication, available in both English and Spanish, can be downloaded from the agency website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html>, along with a variety of other driving safety publications.

The DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. Call 512-804-4620 for more information or visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>. DVDs on many driving dangers can be found under the following headings:

- *Driving Safety;*
- *Transportation Safety*  
(includes safe operation of buses and vans); and
- *Trucking Safety* (covers professional trucking, both in straight trucks and tractor trailers).

### Other Resources

The TxDOT offers tips on dealing with aggressive drivers on their website at <http://www.txdot.gov/driver/share-road/aggressive-drivers.html>.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers a set of resources related to aggressive driving and road rage on their website at [http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/aggressive/aggressive%20web/sse\\_1.html](http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/aggressive/aggressive%20web/sse_1.html). These resources include English and Spanish language brochures.

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) offers an article on "Speeding & Aggressive Driving" on their website at <http://www.ghsa.org/html/issues/speeding.html>.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (AAAFTS) provides an article on "Aggressive Driving" and a longer Aggressive Driving: Research Update on their website at <https://www.aaafoundation.org/aggressive-driving> and <https://www.aaafoundation.org/sites/default/files/AggressiveDrivingResearchUpdate2009.pdf>.

## Safety Tips (cont.)

### Hand and Portable Power Tools (cont.)

- Using a screwdriver as a chisel may cause the blade tip to break off and injure a coworker or yourself. Using a knife blade as a screwdriver can have the same bad result.
- If a wooden handle is cracked, loose, or splintered, the head of the tool may separate from the handle and injure someone nearby. Taping a damaged handle is not a proper way to fix it. Instead, either replace the handle completely or discard the tool.
- A wrench with a sprung jaw should never be used because it can slip easily.
- Using impact tools with mushroomed heads can release flying fragments that cause eye damage or vision loss. Replace tool parts according to manufacturer instructions, or discard the tool.

### General Rules for Portable Power Tools

Handheld power tools can be hazardous when improperly used. Operators need to be properly trained in the use and care of tools before operating them. Recommended training includes understanding the potential hazards associated with power tools and observing the following precautions during use:

- Never carry a power tool by the cord or hose and never yank the cord or hose to disconnect the tool from a power source. This can damage the cord or hose and cause the tool to malfunction.
- Make sure the grounding prongs are present on tool power cords and extension cords before plugging them in.
- Keep cords and hoses away from heat, oil, and sharp edges.
- Disconnect tools when not in use, before servicing, and when changing accessories such as blades, bits, and cutters.

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## Download!

### DWC Resources

The DWC offers the following free safety publications related to tool safety in both English and Spanish:

- *Chainsaw Safety Training Program*;
- *Electric Shock Take 5 for Safety*;
- *Extension Cord Safety FactSheet*;
- *Hand and Portable Power Tools Take 5 for Safety*;
- *Hand and Power Tools Safety Training Program*;
- *Pneumatic Nail Gun Safety FactSheet*; and
- *Powder Actuated Tools Take 5 for Safety*.

These publications can be downloaded from the agency website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html>, along with many other safety publications.

The DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. For more information, call 512-804-4620 or visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>. DVDs on tool safety can be found under the Tool Safety subject heading.

### Other Resources

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offers a Safety and Health Topics page on hand and power tool safety that includes a discussion of employer responsibilities and employee rights, as well as links to standards, hazards and possible solutions, and additional information such as OSHA eTools on Woodworking and Electrical Incidents: Power Tools. The Hand and Power Tools topics page is located on the agency website at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/handpowertools/index.html>.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) offers a Power Tools Database that contains sound power levels, sound pressure levels, and vibrations data for a variety of common power tools that have been tested by researchers. This database also contains downloadable exposure and wave files, as well as links to the NIOSH Hearing Protector Compendium to assist employers and workers in choosing appropriate hearing protection and can be found on the agency website at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/niosh-sound-vibration/>.

## Safety Tips (cont.)

### Hand and Portable Power Tools (cont.)

- Keep observers at a safe distance from the work area. Only the operators should be in the area in which power tools are being used.
- Secure the work with clamps or a vise to keep your hands free. If the material being worked on breaks loose, it could cause a serious injury to the operator.
- To avoid accidental starting, keep your finger off the switch button when carrying a tool that is plugged in.
- Maintain all tools in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Keep the tool's instruction manual, which covers maintenance and safety precaution recommendations.
- Wear manufacturer-recommended personal protective equipment (e.g. goggles, safety glasses, or hard hats) when using the tool.
- Maintain good footing and proper balance when using tools and wear appropriate clothing (no loose clothing, ties, jewelry, etc.) to avoid becoming entangled in moving parts.
- Remove damaged power tools from service and do not use them again until they have been properly repaired.
- Never remove a safety guard. ▲

## OSHA Update

### New Reporting Requirements Start January 1, 2015

**E**ffective January 1, 2015, OSHA changed reporting requirements for employers who are subject to OSHA regulation. Employers are now required to report all work-related fatalities within 8 hours and all in-patient hospitalizations, amputations, and losses of an eye within 24 hours of finding about the incident.

Previously, employers were required to report all workplace fatalities and when three or more workers were hospitalized in the same incident.

The updated reporting requirements have a life-saving purpose: enabling employers and employees to prevent future injuries by identifying and eliminating the most serious workplace hazards.

Texas employers have three options for reporting these severe incidents to OSHA. They can:

- call the OSHA regional field office in Dallas at 1-972-850-4145 during normal business hours;
- call the 24-hour OSHA hotline at 1-800-321-OSHA (1-800-321-6742); or
- report online at <https://www.osha.gov/report-online>.

For more information and resources, including a new YouTube video, visit OSHA's webpage on the updated reporting requirements at <https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping2014/index.html>. ▲

### STARTING JANUARY 1, 2015, ALL EMPLOYERS MUST REPORT TO OSHA:

- All work-related fatalities within 8 hours; and
- All of the following work-related injuries within 24 hours:
  - inpatient hospitalizations;
  - amputations; and
  - losses of an eye.



## Free OSHA Compliance Assistance

**T**he DWC provides a free compliance assistance service for small businesses with fewer than 250 employees at any one facility, and no more than 500 employees nationwide through its Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) Program. OSHCON is a non-regulatory program, and its professional safety and health consultants are available to help you identify and eliminate occupational hazards in your workplace, whether or not your company carries workers' compensation insurance.▲

### Find Out More About OSHCON!

For information about the OSHCON program and assistance with OSHA standards, contact the DWC at 1-800-687-7080 or [OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov), or visit the OSHCON website at <http://www.txoshcon.com>

## Free OSHA 10-Hour Construction Classes

**T**he DWC offers free OSHA 10-Hour Construction classes in both English and Spanish in Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston. Each two-day course is presented by authorized instructors and is designed to train employers and their employees in the essentials of occupational health and safety in construction. Classes cover specific OSHA standards and requirements as they apply to the construction industry and teach safety awareness, which helps in recognizing and reducing the risks of job site hazards. Participants who successfully complete the two-day course will receive an OSHA 10-Hour Construction class completion card within six to eight weeks.▲

### Register!

For additional information on these classes, visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/events/index.html>.

Due to limited space, registration is required. To register or for more information on class availability, call 512-804-4610.

## Report Unsafe Working Conditions

**T**he DWC Safety Violations Hotline is a bilingual, 24-hour, toll-free telephone line that allows Texas employees to confidentially report unsafe working conditions to the DWC. By law, your employer is responsible for providing a safe work environment for you. While working, you may encounter safety and health hazards that could cause injury, illness or death.

The Safety Violations Hotline allows you, the employee, to take an active role in preventing workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. After the DWC receives a report of a work-related safety or health issue, its safety inspectors will work with the employer and insurance carrier to help eliminate hazards.

Employers are prohibited by law from retaliation, and may not suspend, terminate the employment of or otherwise discriminate against an employee for using the telephone service to report in good faith an alleged violation of an occupational safety or health law.▲

### Report a Safety Violation

Report workplace safety or health hazards to the Safety Violations Hotline by calling 1-800-452-9595 or use the online form at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html>. Reports of violations may be made anonymously.

For questions about workers' compensation claims, call the DWC at 1-800-252-7031. To report other non-safety related workplace issues, contact 2-1-1 Texas by dialing 211 on your telephone for information about how to get in touch with the appropriate agency.

## Custom Onsite Training

**T**he DWC offers affordable safety training courses that can be delivered onsite to businesses, groups, and trade associations, with priority given to those industries or occupations that experience high incidences of injuries, illnesses and fatalities in Texas.

The DWC offers more than 30 onsite courses, including the following:

### ***Hand Tool Safety***

Hand tools are the most widely used equipment available to employees. The proper inspection, use and maintenance will ensure that incidents from malfunctioning machines will be reduced. This program will offer instruction that will bring the users into compliance with the 29 CFR 1910 Subpart P and the 29 CFR 1926 Subpart I requirements from OSHA. Program topics include machine guarding requirements, equipment anchoring, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, and general hand tool requirements. *Length: 1 hour per subpart. This program may be included in either the Safety & Health Outreach Program – General Industry or Construction. Can be delivered on its own via teleconference at no cost.*

The DWC Training Program Descriptions guide located on the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/videoresource/ghsphstrainingp.pdf> provides information on course content and length. The cost for onsite training varies according to the travel costs to the training location. Many courses can be presented at no cost to any business/industry via teleconference or webinar. ▲

## Upcoming Safety Observances

**January 1-31, 2015**

***National Radon Action Month***

**February 1-28**

***American Heart Disease Awareness Month***

**February 1-7**

***National Burn Awareness Week***

**March 15-21**

***National Poison Prevention Week***

**March 23-27**

***National Work Zone Awareness Week***

**Book Your  
Training Class!**

To request training, or for more information, call 512-804-4610 or e-mail [safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov).

## DWC, OSHCON, and OSHA Recognize Five Companies with Exemplary Safety Programs

The DWC's OSHCON Program and OSHA recently recognized the following Texas companies for their outstanding safety programs with the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) award.



**Chaparral Industries, Inc.**, which employs 75 people at its Odessa location, handles painting, powder coatings, protective coating applications, and tank linings for the oil and gas industry. This company has been granted a one-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.

**Fishing Tool Repairs and Manufacturing (Crystin Manufacturing, Inc.)**, which employs 44 people at its Odessa location, manufactures drilling equipment for the oil and gas industry. This company has been granted a two-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.

**Southern Plastics, Inc.**, which employs 208 people at its Kilgore location, provides injection molding technology to food and personal care markets. This company has been granted a two-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.

**Kinney Inc.**, which employs 29 people at its Andrews location, provides professional transportation services to the oil and gas industry. This company has been granted a one-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.

**Rusk County Electric Cooperative**, which employs 70 people at its Henderson location, provides electrical service for customers in Rusk, Gregg, Panola, Nacogdoches and Shelby Counties. This company has been granted a two-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.

The SHARP award recognizes small, private sector Texas employers for exemplary safety management programs and low incidence rates of work-related injuries and illnesses after participation in the DWC OSHCON program.

OSHCON is a free service designed to help employers understand and comply with OSHA standards through safety consultations conducted by DWC's professional consultants. Benefits for employers participating in the OSHCON program include prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses; confirmation to their employees and customers of their commitment to safety; public acknowledgment of their safety efforts; monetary savings to the company by reducing workers' compensation costs and other costs associated with work-related injuries and illnesses; and protection of company assets such as employees, equipment, supplies, products and facilities.

Employers receiving consultation services from the OSHCON program may be eligible for SHARP status if they have fewer than 250 employees at a worksite and fewer than 500 employees corporate-wide; have operations limited to a fixed worksite; undergo a full-service OSHCON consultation; involve employees in the consultation process; correct all hazards identified by the consultation; and have days away, restricted or transfer (DART) and total case rate (TCR) injury and illness incidence rates below the national average for their industries. ▲

### Find Out More About SHARP and OSHCON!

For further information about the OSHCON program and SHARP, call 1-800-687-7080, visit the OSHCON website at <http://www.txoshcon.com>, or e-mail [OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov).

## Safety DVDs featuring Power Tool Safety

**T**he DWC Resource Center has more than 4,000 DVDs in its library, including over 100 DVDs related to using power tools safely. Many titles are available in both English and Spanish. Titles and descriptions of these DVDs can be found under the subject heading *Tool Safety*.

### ***How To Have a Chain Saw Accident and Suffer the Consequences*** DVD2878, DVD2878S

"Discusses the basics of operating a chain saw, offers safety tips to prevent kick backs, and reviews safe practices for transporting the chain saw." 9 min.

### ***Powered Hand Tool Safety: Handle With Care*** DVD1150ES

"Shows the safe usage of powered hand tools in a variety of industrial settings. Explains the basic principles of safety for using powered hand tools. Discusses cords and hoses, saws, drills, pneumatic tools and powder actuated tools." 19 min.

### ***Tree Trimming Safety*** DVD410, DVD410S

"Describes hazards associated with tree trimming, including falls, contact with energy sources, falling limbs, high noise levels and snakes. Discusses chain saws, chippers and high lift trucks. Covers tool maintenance and personal protective equipment. Also covers methods of clearing escape paths during tree felling." 18 min. ▲

## Book Your DVDs!



Information on how any Texas employer or employee can check out safety DVDs for free and the DWC Resource Center catalog are available on the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>.



## A Proactive Return to Work Process Will help Employers Reduce and Control Workers' Compensation Costs

**T**he longer an injured employee is away from work, the higher an employer's workers compensation and related business costs will be, and the worse the impact of the injury is on the employee.

We often hear about the advantages of early return to work, but seldom hear how to successfully "do" it. Eliminating medically unnecessary lost time by having a procedure allowing and encouraging an injured employee to continue to do productive work while they recover benefits both the employer and the employee. Employers frequently believe that they do not have the time or resources to provide modified work opportunities.

The DWC provides seminars, consultations and a printed guide to help employers develop a process that suits their particular businesses and workforce needs. The information available through the DWC explores work assignment options that may not have been considered in the past. Reducing absences and costly turnover are added bonuses of a return-to-work program.

Assistance from the DWC will help employers:

- Learn how to work more effectively with claims adjusters, since employer involvement is critical in managing costs and reducing lost time;
- Understand their role and the roles of the treating doctor and claims adjuster;
- Learn how to avoid the pitfalls employers often face when attempting to bring injured employees back to work;
- Take the necessary steps to implement a return-to-work program; and
- Make "real" modified job assignments.

By returning injured employees to work while they are recuperating, they will be earning wages instead of collecting benefits that needlessly could drive workers' compensation insurance premiums higher and higher.▲

### Download!

Additional information, including the *Making Return to Work - Work - for Your Business and Your Employees guide*, can be found on the agency website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/rtw/index.html>.

### Book Your Seminar or Consultation!

To arrange for a seminar or consultation, to receive printed copies of the employer guide, or for additional information, call 512-804-4804 or e-mail [pat.crawford@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:pat.crawford@tdi.texas.gov).

## CONTACT US!

### FREE OSHA COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

- Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) Program  
<http://www.txoshcon.com>  
**1-800-687-7080**  
[OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov)

### SAFETY & HEALTH RESOURCES

- Free Safety and Health Publications  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html>
- Free Audiovisual Loans  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>  
**512-804-4620**
- Safety Training Courses and Seminars  
**512-804-4610**  
[safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov)
- Helpful Safety and Health Resource Links  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/govunivlinks.html>

### DWC RESOURCE CENTER

**512-804-4620**  
[ResourceCenter@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:ResourceCenter@tdi.texas.gov)

### OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS DATA

- Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII)  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/nonfatalhomepag.html>  
**512-804-5020**  
[InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov)
- Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/fathomepage.html>  
**512-804-5020**  
[CFOI@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:CFOI@tdi.texas.gov)

### REPORT A SAFETY VIOLATION OR HAZARD

- Safety Violations Hotline  
Reports are taken in both English and Spanish and may be made anonymously.  
**1-800-452-9595**  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html>

### RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

**512-804-5000**  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/rtw/index.html>

To subscribe to receive e-mail alerts when the *Safety & Health Update* newsletter is published online, plus additional information on occupational safety and health matters, including safety tips and publications, upcoming training events, training DVD loans and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) updates, visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/alert/dwcsafetyhealth.html>.

Please forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues interested in preventing workplace injuries and illnesses.

Have a safe day!